

THE ARGENTINE  
REPUBLIC



ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

Lieut-Commander Juan S. Attwell

AT

Cornell's Cosmopolitan Club

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The Argentine Republic has made a new record for itself during the year 1906, when its foreign commerce reached the unprecedented total of \$563,000,000, of which the imports amounted to \$270,000,000, and the exports to \$293,000,000. Four years ago the imports and exports only totaled \$280,000,000. At this phenomenal rate of increase eight years from now the foreign commerce of Argentina should pass the \$2,000,000,000 mark. The present record, however, is enough to place Argentina far in the lead of other countries about which we hear much more. The Dominion of Canada, for example, peopled as it is by a sturdy race, equal in number to those that toil in the Argentine Republic, has yet to reach Argentina's total foreign commerce; and Japan, with its aggressiveness, its industrious and clever population, eight times larger than that of Argentina, is also behind Argentina in matters of foreign commerce, and so is China with her 400,000,000 of inhabitants.

If we turn to other Latin American countries, we find that Mexico, on the border of the United States, and with a population more than double that of Argentina, has a foreign commerce nearly three times smaller than Argentina, while the foreign commerce of that great empire of wealth, Brazil, with a larger population than Mexico, in 1905 was less than two thirds that of the Argentine Republic.

We all admire the English people who have made Canada what it is today. We all admire the push and energy that characterize the Japanese people, and we are all aware of the great progress made by Mexico

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and Brazil, so it is far from my mind to speak in any way disparagingly of these countries, nor have I the idea of supposing for an instant that the man reared in Argentina is any better than the man reared in any other part of the world. It all depends, then, on a condition of soil and of climate which permits the raising of diversified crops most needed for the sustenance of man and beast, and moreover, to the fact that there is in Argentina a decided willingness of nature to generously respond to the labors of husbandry.

It is mostly due to this favorable natural condition that while in 1888 there were only 6,000,000 acres under cultivation, in 1905 there were 30,000,000 acres under the plough, an increase that was quite out of proportion with the total increase of population during the same period, which was not much over 1,000,000 inhabitants.

If we take into consideration the population of different countries and sum up their imports and exports and then calculate the proportion of the total foreign commerce that corresponds to each inhabitant, we find that each person of Argentina is entitled to over \$100, each person of the United States is entitled to \$35, each person of Brazil to \$20, and each person of Mexico to \$15, while the Republic of Uruguay, which is only separated from Argentina by the River Plate, looms up with \$75 per inhabitant.

When all the arable land of Argentina shall be cultivated, instead of 30,000,000 we shall have 300,000,000 acres under the plough, leaving a balance of nearly 300,000,000 acres more for the purpose of raising sheep and cattle, so that you can see that the future of Argentina's agricultural and pastoral industries is practically boundless. It is estimated that 300,000,000 people will be able to live and thrive in the plains of Ar-

gentina, where at present there are only two persons for each square kilometer, while in Germany, for example, the density of population is 104 persons for each square kilometer.

Argentina today occupies a unique position among the nations that are attracting the attention of mankind as world producing countries. Its fine system of rivers which constitute a magnificent means of communication between Buenos Ayres and the very heart of South America, and which come flowing down from the region where the rubber trees grow wild, linking Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia with the capital of Argentina, as well as the railroad lines that cross the country in all directions and will also join by rail Chili, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay with the mouth of the River Plate, where Buenos Ayres stands, have solved the great problem of transportation and have done more than anything else to hasten the era of great prosperity that the country is now enjoying. The rich soil, the beautiful climate, the means of transportation are there, and these advantages have not been overlooked by the toiling masses of Europe and more than 2,000,000 foreigners have already gone to Argentina. The current of immigration has never been larger than at the present time, and last year 260,000 immigrants came into the country and it is now surmised that this year this figure will be left far behind, since 120,000 immigrants are booked to arrive during the first three months of the present year. Outside of the United States with its 80,000,000 of inhabitants, its immense resources, and situated at a week's distance from Europe, no other country in the world is attracting the number of people that are now flocking to Argentina, eager to spread themselves over the boundless and fertile plains where land is yet relatively cheap and needs

no artificial fertilizer, nor artificial irrigation for that matter, and where the winters are so mild that vegetable life does not perish and shelters are not thought of for our flock of 120,000,000 sheep and our herd of 30,000,000 head of cattle.

Foreign capital is also pouring into the country at a rapid rate and it is now known that about \$1,300,000,000 of English money alone is invested in Argentina and enterprises connected with Argentina and more than \$500,000,000 from other European countries. North America alone has so far stood aloof from competing with other countries in the race for high and sure dividends which Argentina has always yielded to the intelligent investor. I may say that while the Argentine people bought \$39,000,000 worth of goods and agricultural machinery from the United States, last year, the people of the United States only bought \$13,000,000 worth of hides, quebracho and coarse wool from Argentina, and yet we are always hearing at this end of the line that the balance of trade between the United States and South America is decidedly against the former. It is precisely the contrary in the case of Argentina. As a matter of fact, the United States sells nearly as much goods to Argentina alone (and is increasing its sales at the rate of \$10,000,000 per year), as to all the other South American Republics put together, and for this reason, if for no other, we believe that we are entitled to a special hearing when it comes to a question of adjusting commerce. It is also very little known that American imports into Argentina are now second only to those of England and consequently superior to those of Germany, to which country we send a great quantity of our wool crop, free of duty, while wool is taxed in America at the rate of 11 cents per pound, and hides are also heavily taxed.

It speaks very well for the excellence of American industry that in spite of serious tariff drawbacks at this end, about \$200,000,000 have found their way from Argentina to the United States during the last decade to pay for American goods, and if we take into consideration the rapid increase of American exports to Argentina, it is easy to conclude that in the next ten years over \$500,000,000 more will also find their way from Argentina to the American manufacturers, while less than \$150,000,000 will leave America to pay for the imports from Argentina during the same time, therefore leaving a balance in favor of the United States of more than \$350,000,000. This is not a theory, but a condition, and these figures show more than anything else the necessity of improving the means of communication between the two countries and of establishing banks to handle the great volume of money that is passing between them, without having to pay unnecessary tolls to London banking houses and to English ship-owners, as has been done in the past and is being done at present and will continue to be done until the American people will do something more than merely sell their goods cash down to the persistent Argentine purchaser.

I shall not enter into a detailed description of the different industries of the country which can be obtained from a hand-book about Argentina, nor shall I dwell on this occasion upon the advances we have made in manufactures, because it is impossible to conceive a country having reached the stage of development and general prosperity that Argentina has reached without granting that manufactures must have kept pace with all other pursuits, especially when it is remembered that there is no lack of raw material for the artisan to transform into a finished product.

I shall also leave to clever magazine writers the description of our capital city, Buenos Ayres, with over 1,100,000 inhabitants, larger, therefore, than Baltimore and Boston put together, and which is the second largest sea town in the Western Hemisphere. Buenos Ayres has been called a great city by President Roosevelt in his last annual message to Congress, and it called forth the admiration of the Secretary of State, Mr. Root, who, by the way, was received in the harbor of Buenos Ayres by the Argentine students who had graduated in this country and who came to me, headed by the founder of this Club, Mr. Modesto Quiroga, to help them obtain a government boat which was decorated with the flags of the different American universities, and who took this opportunity to manifest their deep appreciation of the kindness shown them in this country. For this reason Mr. Root's first impressions of Argentina were obtained through the students who received him with the hearty college yells peculiar to this country.

As an indication of the business activity of the city of Buenos Ayres, it is sufficient to say that the transactions in real estate during the year of 1906 amounted to more than \$100,000,000. I understand these figures have not been exceeded by Greater New York during the same period of time. Besides, over \$25,000,000 were devoted to the construction of new private dwelling houses.

The country at large has awakened to a realizing sense of its usefulness and land values have multiplied during the last five years, the price of living has increased and labor is scarce from the Atlantic to the Andes and from Tierra del Fuego to the borders of Bolivia. Our port facilities are not sufficient to accommodate all our shipping, our railroads are in want of



more rolling stock to carry our crops, booming conditions in this respect being similar to those prevailing at present in the United States.

We have capital, we have labor, and we have enterprising men, but we need more capital, we need more labor, and we need more enterprising men to help us steer the ship of state through the channels of prosperity. More railroads must be built, canals must be opened, more ships must be constructed for the navigation of our rivers and new avenues and subways must be cut through our congested cities. These are only a few of our pressing needs and serve to show the possibilities that the country offers to large investors seeking immediate returns. The cry of progress is always more progress and we feel that we have just started in the career of producing wealth, possibly because we are only now beginning to realize the full meaning of its attending responsibilities, which we are, of course, far from wishing to shirk and are striving to meet in every way.

If from works of such importance which require millions of dollars for their completion, we turn to the man of small means wishing to make a start in life, I can say from personal experience that Argentina offers to such a one opportunities rarely found in more thickly populated countries where competition is much greater and where the existence of powerful trusts are every day reducing the field of usefulness of the independent business man. And that we need and want young men who have some knowledge to impart to others less fortunate than themselves is amply proven by the fact that the Argentine government is expending big sums of money to educate a large number of such young men in Europe and in this country, so that when they return they can exchange views with those who are ac-

quiring the same sort of knowledge at home in our own institutions of learning, and all can then aid with their advice, their energy and their enterprise in the general development of the country. For this purpose the doors of the American universities have been open to our college boys and I take this opportunity to express on behalf of my government its sincere and earnest appreciation for this service.

I only wish to add that Mr. Root in his addresses has pointed out with clearness that the leading countries to the south of the United States have gone so much ahead already as to warrant a continued era of prosperity for them and to preclude the possibility of their ever turning back to the time when political disturbances were common among them. In Argentina, at least, the wilderness has been vanquished by the steel rail and the marauding politician has been left without a trade. The statesman and the husbandman have the country in hand and are doing their best to place it and keep it in the lead of those nations which are fortunately capable of yielding the products needed to feed and clothe a large portion of mankind.





